

REMARKS

I. Pending Claims

Claims 1, 10-13, and 16-19 are pending in this application. Claim 1 is the only independent claim. Claims 1 and 16-17 are currently amended. Claims 2-9 and 14-15 are/were canceled without prejudice to and/or disclaimer of the subject matter therein.

Claims 1-6, 9-11 and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Watanabe.

Claims 12, 14, 16, and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Watanabe (USP 6,258,163) (“Watanabe”).

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Watanabe in view of Sakai (USP 6,608,482) (“Sakai”).

Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Watanabe in view of Cherng (USP 5,656,920) (“Cherng”).

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of these rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. In addition, the Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment does not raise a new issue(s) since the amendment merely incorporates previously allowed (and considered) subject matter into claim 1.

II. Pending Claims/Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action indicates that claim 15 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but that it would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, claim 1, the only independent claim, has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 15, as well as claim 14 (from which claim 15 depends). The Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment is being made without conceding to the propriety of the 35 USC § 102/103 rejections set forth in the previous Office Action and in order to expedite prosecution.

Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that, for at least these reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over the cited references.

III. Conclusion

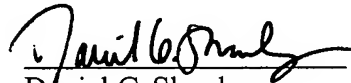
The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to discuss any issues related to the application. An early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments which may be incurred in connection with this paper under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:


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